

SIGNS OF OUR LORDS RETURN

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There has been much futile speculation regarding the time of the coming of the Lord. Many have set dates, and stated the exact time for this event only to be proved false.

Remember it is quite impossible for anyone to figure out the exact time for the return of Jesus. That is one thing God has not revealed. In Matthew 24:36 I read: "Of that day and hour knows no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only." So, my friends, whenever you hear people stating the exact time of our Lord's return, you can know with assurance that they are wrong.

However, while it is impossible for anyone to know the exact time for the coming of Christ, it is our business to know when His coming is near. I would have you notice the words of Jesus in Matthew 24:32: "Now learn a parable of the fig tree. When his branch is yet tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is nigh: so likewise you, when you shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." This picture of the fig tree is something that everybody understands. When the buds on the trees begin to swell, we all know that means Spring is here. Jesus tells us that when we see the signs that He has given, we may know that His coming is near, "even at the doors." He has given us signs that are just like so many swelling buds.

Some will say: "Mr. Burnside, people have been expecting Christ to come for hundreds of years: time and time again they have preached that His coming is near at hand, but He did not come. How can we know that it is any nearer now?"

Is our day like other times? Absolutely not. There never was a time like this. Our day is different in its financial, industrial, scientific, mechanical, national, international, physical, moral, religious and social aspects.

Our day is set off from every other time in the world as a day of rapid transit. People are travelling many times faster than they ever traveled before. What does this mean? Nahum 2:3, 4 says: "The chariots shall be with flaming torches in the day of His preparation. The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightning." Do we see this? Indeed we do.

This is the great age of speed. There was never such a time. There was little change in the speed with which men could travel until about one hundred years ago. A century ago men were travelling at the same speed as they were four thousand years ago - on land, as fast as the horse would carry them; on sea, as fast as the wind would drive the ship. About one hundred years ago something happened. Men suddenly began to move faster. In 1809 the first steamboat, invented by Robert Fulton, made its way down the Hudson River. The first passenger train ran down the tracks in 1825. In 1890 the first automobile made its appearance. In 1903 the first airplane made a successful flight in North Carolina, with the Wright Brothers at the controls; and thus ushered in the great age of speed.

Our day is one of greatly increased knowledge. There are endless inventions and discoveries. What does it all mean? Daniel 12:4 will tell us. Here are words written twenty-five hundred years ago, and you see them fulfilled now before your eyes. "Thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." "The time of the end" is a little space of time before the actual end of time. That is going to happen in that period before the end? "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Do we see it? There has been a greater increase of knowledge in the last one hundred years than in all the previous history of mankind.

Life has been revolutionized. The tallow candle has become the electric light; the quill has become the typewriter; the broom has become the electric sweeper; the horse and cart, the motor car; the needle, the electric sewing machine. What does it all mean? In the time of the end "knowledge shall be increased." It means that we are in "the time of the end" and the end of time is drawing near.

The last days were to be marked by a great accumulation of wealth and bitter labor troubles. In the last part of James 5:3, speaking of the men of wealth, we read: "You have heaped treasure together for the last days." The Revised Version makes it clearer: "You have laid up your treasure in the last days." Since 1900 there has been- a heaping up of wealth, a piling up of great fortunes, a making of millionaires and multimillionaires never seen before.

One of the most striking features of our day is the struggle between capital and labor. What does this mean? James 5:8 will tell us: "Be ye also patient; establish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draws nigh." There can be no mistake about it. God says that when

you see these great fortunes being piled up, and this rising tide of labor trouble, the coming of the Lord is drawing nigh. This is a great double sign in the financial world.

Look into the political world. The last days are to be marked by the greatest war preparation ever known. Joel 2:2,9, 10, 14, tells us about it: "I will ... gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat. Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up; beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong." That is what they are doing now. The whole world is in arms.

The last days are to be marked by the greatest unrest this world has ever known. "There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring." Luke 21:25. Are we in the time of the "distress of nations"? Everybody knows that there was never such distress of nations as there is today. Look at Europe - the Middle East - the Far East! There is distress everywhere among all classes that surpasses any time that you have ever read about.

Read right on: "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Luke 21:26, 27. We see on earth exactly what Jesus Christ said we should see in the very last days; and the next event in God's program is the coming of Jesus.

In Matthew 24:14 we have another sign - the most encouraging of all. "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Right then shall the end come. This great missionary movement, represented by the writer, is carrying the message of Christ's soon coming to every nation in over 800 languages. This is a supreme sign that He is near, and that brings you and me face to face with a tremendous question: Are we ready to meet Jesus? That is what all this means to us. There will be no chance to get ready when He comes.

We cannot stop Christ from Coming. Even if everybody in the world doubts it, He will come just the same. It is a great oncoming that nobody in the world can stop or stay for a moment. "Be ... ready: for in such an hour as you think not the Son of man comes." Matthew 24:44.

When the flood in Noah's day was about to come, the people said, "How can it ever happen?" Noah warned them for one hundred and twenty years, but only seven besides himself believed it. The rest could have been saved, but they didn't believe and they were lost. The only people in the world who were saved were the people who prepared to be saved. The call of this hour is to get ready.

"Prepare to meet thy God." There will be only two classes of people when Jesus comes. One class will pray for the rocks to fall on them; and the other class will be saying, "Lo, this is our God." Revelation 6:14-17; Isaiah 25:9.

The only way to be ready is to have Christ in our hearts by His Holy Spirit. Jesus wants to come into our hearts. He says: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."

Revelation 3:20. Let us extend to Him the invitation He desires, and do it now. Open the door and let Him in.

"Open the door, my brother
And let the Lord come in;
His presence is sweeter, my brother,
Than all the delights of sin,
The way that seems broad and flowery
Is the way that will end in gloom;
The way that is straight and narrow
Is the path toward love and home."

Matthew	24:5,11,23,24 False Christs 24:6,7 Wars and rumors of wars 24:37-39 As in the days of Noah
Mark	13:24-30 False Christs, False prophets Wars, Earthquakes, famines, troubles Counterfeit miracles
Luke	17:26,27 As in the days of Noah 17:28-32 As Sodom and Gomorrah 21:11 Earthquakes, famines, disease 21:25,26 Wars, revolutions, perplexity
2 Thessalonians	2:3 Rise of the Roman Catholic Church
1 Timothy	4:1-3 False doctrines, Spiritualism and doctrines of demons
2 Timothy	3:1-13 Perilous times Men lovers of self Covetous Boasters Proud Blasphemers Disobedient to parents Unthankful Unholy Without natural affection Truce breakers False accusers Incontinent Fierce Traitors Despises of those that are good Heady Lovers of pleasure more than God High minded Pretending to be Godly but are not Not knowing truth Reject truth of God Corrupt minds Reprobates from the faith Evil seducers Getting worse every day
James	5:1-8 Labor troubles – strikes
2 Peter	3:3-12 Scoffers rejecting creationism & flood account
Jude	1:14-18 Evil speech
Revelation	6:12-17 Signs in the heavens 13:1-18 Rise in power of the Catholic Church

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